



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

*The City of New York*  
*Borough of Queens*

**Community Board 8**

197-15 Hillside Avenue  
Hollis, NY 11423-2126  
Telephone: (718) 264-7895  
Fax: (718) 264-7910  
Qn08@cb.nyc.gov  
www.nyc.gov/queenscb8



District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Minutes of Community Board 8 Meeting held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at the Hillcrest Jewish Center at 183-02 Union Turnpike, Queens, NY 11366.

**Attendance:**

**Board Members Present:**

Saaif Alam, Heather Bennett-Idels, Edward Chung, Lavelda Davis, Sheleeza Deen, Maria DeInnocentiis, Bhitihara Martha-Fulton, Allen Eisentstein, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Ahsan Habib, Michael Hannibal, Mohammed “Delwar” Islam, Elke Maerz, David Mordukhaev, Alan Ong, Nikolas Michael, Dilip Nath, Hersh Parekh, Israel Peskowitz, Mariso Perez, Tammy Oshero, Frances Peterson, Jesse Rosenbaum, Mohammad Rahman, Kelly Sexton, Wendy Gennaro, Harbachan Singh, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Douglas Sherman, and Martha Taylor.

**Board Members Absent:**

Neeta Jain, Dilaftroz Ahmed, Kenneth Cohen II, Marva Dudley, Armando Echeverry, Howard Fried, Joshua Glickman, Roger Joyner, Jennifer Martin, Caitlin Marziliano, Doretha McFadden, Aliyah Salim, Seymour Schwartz, Steven Villaran, Mayer Waxman and Jacob Weinberg.

**Others Present:**

Josh Simanowitz representing Assembly Member Sam Berger, Shubhra Datta representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Rochung Cheng representing Council Member Linda Lee, Rokeya Akhter representing Queens DA Melinda Katz, Peter Paulo representing Councilman James F. Gennaro, Wael Abdall representing Senator Toby Stavisky, Yvonne Oliver representing NAACP-Jamaica, Ryan Alwi representing Senator Leroy Comrie, Marcia Biederman representing NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees, Captain Mo Tsang representing NYPD – 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct, DM Marie Adam-Ovide and CB8 Staffer Nettie V. Norris.

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Martha Taylor called this Board Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

.....  
**Public Participation:**

**David Kupferberg**

He spoke about the new bus routes in Queens and is very disappointed with many of the routes. In particular, inconvenience to passengers, traffic and air pollution. He is upset that our taxpayer dollars are being spent on the Hillside Avenue bus priority changes while at the same time, residents have no say in the matter.

**Bill Anello – President Flushing Civic Association**

He shared his concerns about a 3 or 5 story building going up on 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. He objects.

### **Disomine Ezryah**

He presented his concerns about a commercial construction going on at 185<sup>th</sup> /186<sup>th</sup> Street and Union Turnpike.

- Breathing
- Air quality
- Noise
- Can't open windows/dust
- Heavy traffic

He wants DOB to do a review of the plans. He also wants daily enforcement regarding the traffic.

*Chairperson Martha Taylor suggested he reach out to CB8.*

### **Gary Rober**

He spoke about the Fresh Meadows Vision Developmental Plan for the erecting of structures. According to the statement of general purposes special plan to community preservation district resolution which was adopted by the city council and is now law, the mandate is to preserve and protect the special districts, Fresh Meadows being one of them. What this plan entails is to demolish blocks of residences forcing residents to relocate. The plan will also take away our green spaces and parking spaces.

### **Rokeya Akhtar – Queens DA Melenda Katz**

DA Katz joined Governor Kathy Hochul as she announced an agreement with State Legislative leaders to make essential changes to existing discovery laws. These negotiated changes to the discovery statute will help preserve the rights of the accused, improve public safety and protect victims. Last year on June 3, 2024, two cops were shot in East Elmhurst. Both officers survived and the perpetrator was caught and convicted. He was sentenced to 28 years in jail. We will have our gun buyback event this coming Saturday. Last year the office took 1,029 scooters off the street and this year over 100 have been taken off thus far.

### **Ryan Alwi – Senator Leroy Comrie**

There was a small fire in our office that caused us to be closed for a month. Since May 27<sup>th</sup>, we have been open for business. We have a few events coming up.

- June 12<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. – Father's of our history event in conjunction with Councilmember Brooks-Powers at 227-12 Merrick Blvd., Laurelton
- June 13<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. - Mt. Moriah AME Church, Cambria Heights – “Beat the Heat” you can apply for free air conditioners provided by “HEAT”.
- June 14<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 a.m. – Assistance with getting new passports – Majority Baptist Church, St. Albans (bring ID and Social Security card). There are a few events coming up in the near future.

### **Peter Paulo representing Councilmember Jim Gennaro**

We are hosting the last two of our Family Fun Days – June 20<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. in The Real Good Playground & June 29<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. in the Mauro Playground.

### **Rochung Cheng – Councilwoman Linda Lee**

Our office is hosting a few events coming up soon.

- Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. - Fraud Prevention seminar at Commonpoint.
- Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.- Family Fun Day in Alley Pond Park.
- Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Recycle E-Waste in Alley Pond Athletic playground.
- Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Adopt a Pet Today! Alley Pond Park.

- Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Shredding Event – Cunningham Park – Parking Lot 1

### **Scott Sieber – Senator John Liu**

A few events are coming up.

- Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 pm – Paper Shredding event – Cunningham Park
- June 19<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p. m. – Juneteenth celebration – Lewis Latimer House in Flushing
- Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. – Health & Wellness Fair – Community Center, Flushing
- Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. – Compost/Container distribution (fee) in Kissena Park
- Remember - June 27<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – CB8 Annual Health Fair in Cunningham Park.

### **Shubhbra Datta – Queens Borough President Donovan Richards**

For this month, here are some of the updates that our office is hosting.

- Southeast Queens Town Hall - June 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.- Robert Ross Johnson Center on Linden Boulevard – 172-17 Linden Boulevard.
- Long Island City Neighborhood Plan Hybrid Land Use Public Hearing - June 26<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 a.m.
- Colombian Independence Day - July 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 p.m.

*Chairperson Taylor requested a roll call.*

*DM Adam-Ovide announced we have a quorum.*

*Salute to the flag*

*Chairperson Taylor requested a motion to approve the minutes of May 14, 2025.*

*Michael Hannibal made the motion and was seconded by Harbachan Singh.*

*Chairperson Taylor asked if anyone had any corrections or concerns about the minutes – answer was yes.*

*Hersh Parekh pointed out there was an error in the vote count for the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan.*

*Chairperson Martha Taylor stated the minutes would be approved with the necessary corrections.*

*Chairperson Taylor requested that those in favor of approving the minutes with corrections raise your hand.*

Yes - 33

No - 0

Abstention - 0

*The motion passed unanimously.*

**Members For:** Saaif Alam, Heather Bennett-Idels, Edward Chung, Lavelda Davis, Sheleeza Deen, Maria DeInnocentiis, Bhitihara Martha-Fulton, Allen Eisentstein, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Ahsan Habib, Michael Hannibal, Mohammed “Delwar” Islam, Elke Maerz, David Mordukhaev, Alan Ong, Nikolas Michael, Dilip Nath, Hersh Parekh, Israel Peskowitz, Mariso Perez, Tammy Osheroov, Frances Peterson, Jesse Rosenbaum, Mohammad Rahman, Kelly Sexton, Wendy Gennaro, Harbachan Singh, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Douglas Sherman, and Martha Taylor.

### **Chairperson’s Report – Martha Taylor**

- In the CB8 Members’ packets, you will find a list with your committee assignments. If you did not submit your form to the office, you were kept in the same committees as you were on last year. Please do your best to

attend the meetings of the committees that you have chosen. We have a big problem with people not attending the meetings.

Also, you'll see various flyers in your packet, which include: our new Neighborhood Coordinating Officers (NCO's), a list of events coming up at Cunningham Park for the summer and information on our annual health fair. We have our CB8 picture which looks great. Thank you, photographer!

### **Captain Mo Tsang - 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Commanding Officer?**

- Crime is down – in the last 28 days 103 versus 128 about 19.5 %. Year to date 624 versus 695.
- Grand Larceny Auto Theft (GLA) continues to be on the rise – up by 349 versus 46 – increase of 64.5%.
- Elderly scams are on the rise. Watch out for calls from the IRS, Banks, Lawyers and others that are unknown to you.

*Sheleeza Deen – A Scam App showed up on my phone. What should I do, can it be deleted?*

*Captain Tsang – I can show you how to delete it and reset the phone.*

### **Health Minute with Dr. Penny Stern – Health Committee Chair**

June is observed as Headache Awareness Month. The aim is to raise awareness about headaches in general and migraines in particular. 12% of the population of the US suffers from migraines. Worldwide, about 2% of the world's population is estimated to be migraineurs. Women are more likely, than men, to experience migraines. There are various substances that may trigger migraines: cheese, chocolate, coffee, cola and citrus fruits and dehydration. According to experts, migraine remains extremely underdiagnosed and undertreated. Patients often don't consult doctors, and many doctors receive only minimal education on headache management. There are treatments available to handle acute episodes and to prevent future ones. There are other kinds of headaches but the important thing to remember is that you must consult with your provider to determine what specifically is going on with you to be effectively treated.

### **District Manager's Report June, 2025**

#### **Department of Parks and Recreation**

Parks Manager Nelson Fung shared the events at Cunningham Park. Parking Lot #2 will be renovated starting on June 6<sup>th</sup> and the work will last for about four months.

#### **Police Department**

Crime is down for the last 28 days except for GLA (grand larceny auto) and rape. These rapes were not perpetrated by strangers but by individuals known to the victim (i.e. boyfriend, etc.). Please do not leave valuables in your vehicles. Scams are up.

Community Affairs will have a car wash fundraiser on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. You get your vehicle washed for \$15 plus you get a hamburger or hot dog while you wait.

#### **Department of Design and Construction**

The Tide Gate Bridge project is underway. The asbestos removal is almost completed. They have installed the Cofferdam Sheeting. They have created a pedestrian walkway along the side of the bridge going east to west.

**Project HWPR23Q1** – Installation of pedestrian ramps is also underway. They are working on both CB8 and CB12. They worked on Main Street near Gravett Road, 68<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 68<sup>th</sup> Drive and 69<sup>th</sup> Avenue last week. There is no parking while the work is underway. If a vehicle is parked at these locations, it will be towed to another location a block or two away. They are planning to share where these vehicles are parked with the CB

and the Police Precinct. They are working in Community Board 12 this week and may return to CB8 next week.

### **Con Edison**

They want us to remind residents never to touch fallen trees, and wires. Always report outages directly to Con Edison. If you lose power, please call their 800 number.

### **Department of Sanitation**

I sent an email to Sanitation Superintendent Mazzola on May 21<sup>st</sup> requesting the agency's plan for addressing the medians issue and I copied Antonio Whitaker (Intergovernmental Liaison). The latter responded that Mayor Adams is planning to add funding in the next fiscal year starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition, he will share the plan once it is available.

The issue is that these medians needed attention last month. When asked what is being done to address them in the current fiscal year, Superintendent Mazzola stated that they have limited resources to address the medians. He reached out to the Sanitation Borough Chief for assistance. He claimed he did not receive complaints. I gave him the locations that needed attention last week (*i.e. Francis Lewis Blvd., Hillside Avenue, Utopia Parkway, etc.*). I also brought this matter to our Borough President at the Borough Cabinet meeting yesterday. He stated that he is scheduled to speak to the DSNY Commissioner next week. I'll keep you posted.

**The 12th Community Board 8Q's Annual Health Fair** will be on **Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>** from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Cunningham Park. **We hope to see you there!**



*John Gebhard, Elke Maerz, Alan Ong & Mohammed Tohin*

*Marie Adam-Ovide*

### **Executive Committee - Harbachan Singh, Treasurer & Chair of Government Affairs**

Healthcare Bill - Intro 1096-2024 – NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees requesting Community Board support. This Bill seeks to amend the administrative code of the City of New York in relation to protecting the vested health insurance coverage and contributions of retirement employees of the City of New York. We have 14 city council members who are proud to support this intro. We have a guest speaker that will come and speak more about the request.

### **Guest Speaker – Marcia Biederman**

She is a retired teacher and Medicare eligible. She was under the impression that when she retired, she would get Medicare. Not knowing, Medicare only covers 80%. For decades city retirees have gotten a plan called Senior Care to cover the extra 20%. Since Medicare has removed the Senior Care Plan and replaced it with the Advantage Plan, which you have to pay into. We need community board support to spell out what we want.

**Question:** Chairperson Martha Taylor – What would you like from us?

**Answer:** Marcia Biederman – A letter of support or resolution stating; Every city retiree is entitled to tradition Medicare plus a city paid supplement similar to Emblem Senior Care which we all had in 2001. We want to preserve what we had. We’re not asking for anything extra.

***Chairperson Martha Taylor – We need a vote.***

Harbachan Singh made a motion to support Bill 1096 by letter.  
Seconded by Heather Bennett-Idels and Jesse Rosenbaum.

**Members For:** Saaif Alam, Heather Bennett-Idels, Edward Chung, Lavelda Davis, Sheleeza Deen, Maria DeInnocentiis, Bhitihara Martha-Fulton, Allen Eisentstein, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Ahsan Habib, Michael Hannibal, Mohammed “Delwar” Islam, Elke Maerz, David Mordukhaev, Alan Ong, Nikolas Michael, Dilip Nath, Hersh Parekh, Israel Peskowitz, Mariso Perez, Tammy Oshero, Frances Peterson, Jesse Rosenbaum, Mohammad Rahman, Kelly Sexton, Wendy Gennaro, Harbachan Singh, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse, Dr. Penny Stern, Douglas Sherman, and Martha Taylor.

**Yes - 33**

**No - 0**

**Abstentions - 0**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Public Hearing:**

BSA Calendar – 135-08-BZ – Queens Block 6959 Lot 1 & 9 (AKA 71-52 172nd Street and 71-55 171<sup>st</sup>. Street) for the legalization of the addition of an accessory kitchen in the cellar and an amendment to enlarge the existing (Use Group IIIB) House of Worship. Hersh Parekh, Chair of Zoning Committee

**Hersh Parekh**

We are here on behalf of the Fresh Meadows Bukharian Synagogue located at 71-52 172<sup>nd</sup> Street.

**Alexia Landsman, Attorney representing the Bukharian Synagogue**

She handed out hard copies and proceeded with the presentation.

**Concern: Dr. Penny Stern** – I live a couple of blocks from there. There are several synagogues in the immediate area and none are three stories high. I think it’s a bit excessive.

**Response: Alexia Landsman** – We are only asking for one foot higher. We will work with the space that is already there.

**Concern: Hersh Parekh** – There was a kitchen added and the applicant did not go through the proper process of going before the community board.

**Response: Alexia Landsman** – The applicant was not aware they had to go to BSA for an accessory kitchen. We plan to legalize the kitchen with the BSA moving forward.

**Concern: Dilip Nath**– I supported this synagogue when it was first built. The problem is the new members. They do not respect our community. There is not enough space on the corner for this addition. It takes up most of the sidewalk causing people to have to walk in the street. They have parties and play loud music.

**Response: Alexia Landsman** – We want your input so we can improve on the faults.

**Response: Mike Corte – works with Alexia** – We looked at sound noise, pedestrian foot traffic and we did not find any impediments. The new addition would allow for another street lane. Also, the members, for the most part, travel by foot and not cars.

**Hersh Parekh – Please ask questions moving forward. We can have discussions afterward.**

**Question: Saaif Alam** - Is there at least 75% of support in this community.

**Answer: Alexia Landsman** - This wasn't done overnight. We have letters of support which I will leave with the CB8 District Manager.

**Question: Amy Tse** – Will parking be a problem?

**Answer: Mike Corte** – No. There will be an increase in cars and if there are more than 50 cars, we will have to do a little more research on how to accommodate them.

**Question: Amy Tse** – How many kids will be dropped off by parents with cars?

**Answer: Alexia Landsman** – I'll hand it over to the president.

**Answer: Robert Arnold, President of the Synagogue**

We have about 100 kids coming in now for different programs. We will have an additional 100 in the future. We have had to turn some away because we don't have space right now.

**Question: Maria DeInnocentiis** – The 100 kids now and 200 kids in the future are being dropped off by their parents and picked up by their parents. This is where the traffic issue comes up. There will be double parking, streets being jammed up and so forth. We are not talking about religious events where they walk, we're talking about events where people are traveling to get to them. It's a big problem for the community.

**Answer: Robert Arnold** – The programs don't happen at the same time. There will be no big influx where 100 kids are being dropped off at the same time. The programs are on different days and times.

**Question: Bhitihara** – I worked for 25 years in a secure environment. You have the children on the third floor and only one stairwell on the second floor. What are you thinking?

**Answer: Jerry Caliendo, Architect** – This is not a building code variance, it is a zoning variance. Anything that gets built will be 1000% up to code. We will have two means of egress.

**Concern: Hersh Parekh** – You are confirming that if this gets built, it will have two means of egress.

**Answer: Jerry Caliendo** – It must get approved by the Department of Buildings which will require it.

**Question: Wendy Gennaro** – I just want to clarify this. There is no day school there and the only programs you do have are after school and Sunday programs, correct? The programs are staggered during the week so you won't have a deluge of cars moving at the same time. It seemed like some in here were a bit confused about that issue so that's why I asked.

**Answer: Alexia Landsman** – That is correct. Thank you for your clarification.

**Question: Jesse Rosenbaum** – You want to change the FAR from 1.2 usable space? The kitchen in the basement will not be used for cooking?

**Answer: Alexia Landsman** – Absolutely not. There will be no cooking in the kitchen. The food will be prepared outside (catered) and brought in.

**Question: Ed Chung** – Is the basement area a dining room as well? Where will they dine?

**Answer: Alexia Landsman** – No. It is a break area. They walk around and eat.

**Hersh Parekh** – We will now open the floor up for the Public Hearing. Please limit your comments to 1 minute & 30 seconds. I have a list of names. When I call you, please come up to the front.

### **Public Speakers**

Rafael Yagudayev, Daniel Yagudayev, Yefim Yagudayev and Dr. Mathew – Against  
David Rahmnov, Dani Millaev and Ed Koyenov – Support  
Davrayev Avrom, Chaim Aronov Esq. and David Pinkhasov – Support

**No Shows** - Roman Shimunov, Matatov Matat, Mirakov Ilya, Borukhova Juliya, Gavriellov Shimun, Fatakhov Sion, Aminov Mani, Fazilov Boris, Fayzakov Miroslav,

**Comment: Israel Peskowitz** – I want to speak on the character of the synagogue. My non-profit has had many events there; lectures, teachings, seminars and no parties.

**Comment: Mohammad Tohin** – The parking may be an issue but it takes kids off the street. They have good programs. I support them.

**Comment: Maria DeInnocentiis** – We have a board that supports our community synagogues, churches and religious groups. We want to see them thrive and be a part of the community. Based on what I'm hearing tonight, this synagogue is not working with the community. They lied about the kitchen, promising the neighbors there would be no garbage (saw pictures). They are advertising about food being catered and no dining (they eat standing up). They have parties going on (saw pictures). Liars don't deserve to be told yes to do what you want. They can have a two-story building, as of right. I am not saying they can't expand. I'm asking my members to consider that when they take this vote. I would like to make a complaint about the illegal kitchen, parties and garbage. Dr. Stern, Dilip Nath and my civic do not support this. I would like to have this re-written and sent back to the drawing board.

**Hersh Parekh** – I am the chair of the zoning committee and since I have been, we have approved multiple variances for houses of worship, and we have had no complaints. They have been good neighbors. My concern is that you have presented a project, made certain assertions that were contradicted or offered a different perspective. I am concerned that this institution has not acted like a good neighbor. The fact that the kitchen was added illegally some years ago is a major concern.

**Chairperson Martha Taylor made a motion to approve this application seconded by Harbachan Singh.**

**Hersh Parekh** – The motion is to approve. If you approve, say yes. If you do not approve, say no.  
Hersh Parekh asked DM Adam-Ovide to do a roll call.

**Members for:** Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, David Mordukhaev, Israel Peskowitz, Jesse Rosenbaum, Kelly Sexton, Harbachan Singh, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin and Mayer Waxman.

**Members Against:** Saaif Alam, Heather Bennett-Idels, Edward Chung, Lavelda Davis, Sheleeza Deen, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisentstein, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Ahsan Habib, Michael Hannibal, Mohammed "Delwar" Islam, Elke Maerz, Nikolas Michael, Dilip Nath, Hersh Parekh, Mariso Perez, Tammy Osherov, Frances Peterson, Mohammad Rahman, Amy Tse, Dr. Penny M. Stern, and Douglas Sherman.

**Yes – 9      No – 22      Abstentions – 1 for cause (Alan Ong\*)      The motion failed.**

Chairperson Martha Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Nettie V. Norris, CB8 Staff*  
July 7, 2025